

News from Senator

BOB DOLE



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DOLE INTRODUCES SENATE RESOLUTION HONORING MIDEAST SPECIAL NEGOTIATOR PHILIP HABIB

WASHINGTON -- Senator Robert Dole (R.-Kan.) today introduced a Senate Resolution honoring the achievements of U.S. Special Negotiator Philip Habib during the recent crisis in Lebanon. Habib, who will continue his work towards a lasting Mideast peace, was yesterday awarded the Medal of Freedom by President Reagan in a White House ceremony.

The following is the text of Senator Dole's Congressional Record statement:

In an area that has been torn by conflict for many years, the Lebanese conflict seemed to many of us one more long and discouraging step away from the peace settlement we have sought for so long. The suspicions and resentments that were aroused in the course of the crisis caused concern, as well, that the United States might risk losing a significant part of its ability to influence events throughout the entire region of the Middle East.

But, despite these exceedingly difficult circumstances, Mr. Habib undertook the task of serving as a special negotiator in the crisis with the full commitment of his talent and his energies. Throughout the long weeks of painstaking negotiation on arrangements for evacuation of the Palestinian forces from Beirut, he carried on with a clear-eyed appreciation of the obstacles in his path but, at the same time, with a courageous determination to overcome them.

In winning agreement to terms for an orderly departure of Palestinian forces from Beirut, Mr. Habib also helped to renew the opportunity for progress toward a settlement of the wider differences that still afflict the region of the Middle East -- an opportunity that President Reagan has seized with the presentation of his new peace initiative, for which we all hold great hopes and offer our support.

Yesterday, in recognition of Mr. Habib's dedication to his task and his high accomplishments, the President awarded him the Medal of Freedom. All of us here, in the name of the American people, wish to join with the President in expressing our highest praise and our most heartfelt gratitude for the noble contribution he has made toward peace in the Middle East and throughout the world.